

MINUTES
OPC MEETING
MAY 24, 2016

First Selectman Stevenson called the meeting to order in Room 206 of Town Hall at 8:38 am.

Present were First Selectman Jayme Stevenson, Board of Education Chairman Michael Harman, Board of Finance Chairman Jon Zagrodzky, Chairman of Planning & Zoning Commission Susan Cameron, State Representative Terrie Wood and RTM Moderator Sarah Seelye. Selectman Susan Marks was also in attendance.

Board of Education

The Board of Education has received the initial facilities report prepared by KG&D. One finding of the study indicated that Ox Ridge Elementary School offers the availability to expand the building while the school remains open. The full report will be presented at an 8:45am meeting on June 7, 2016. The meeting will allow for an in depth discussion of all aspects of the report.

Mr. Harman commented that the school calendar for 2017-2018 has been set, a discussion of lights at DHS is on the agenda for tonight's BOE meeting and that DHS held its annual awards ceremony last week.

Planning & Zoning

Ms. Cameron stated that the Dr. of Planning & Zoning Jeremy Ginsberg created a memo dated May 23, 2016 to Michael Harman and Dr. Brenner providing an overview and timeline for proposed developments in Darien through 2019. The commission is scheduled to continue a public hearing on the Noroton Heights zoning amendments tonight, May 24, 2016. Also at tonight's meeting the Commission is likely to vote on whether to approve an application from the Noroton Bay Yacht Club for a liquor license and building modifications. A public hearing on the Baywater Properties project in downtown Darien had to be rescheduled to May 31, 2016 because of a lack of a quorum (due to a fire which created problems with Metro North).

Board of Finance

Mr. Zagrodzky reviewed the budget process that resulted in a 15.77 mill rate. Typically the five-year budget review begins in November. Moving forward the BOF will start the review during the summer. This will allow for more in-depth discussion, the ability to build in some budget scenarios and develop plans to address each scenario.

The Town's debt levels for 2016 and projected for 2017 and 2018 were mentioned. The debt level is reduced each of the stated years. Mr. Zagrodzky reviewed debt capacity guidelines.

State Representative

Mrs. Wood talked about the distribution of tax revenue towns send to the State. While recognizing that cities often have more land that is tax exempt such as churches, universities and hospitals which are utilized by members of neighboring suburban communities she is still seeking a more equitable balance in distribution of the funds. Due to a decrease in tax income revenue the State's bond rating went from AA to AA-.

Finally, Brendan Sharkey is not seeking re-election so he will be stepping down as Speaker of the House and at Mrs. Wood's request, Keith M. Phaneuf, financial reporter for the Connecticut Mirror spoke about Connecticut's budget and finances at the Darien Library on May 17, 2016.

Terrie Wood left at 9:20 am.

RTM Moderator

Mrs. Seelye mentioned that the Rules Committee met on May 23, 2016 to set the agenda for the RTM's June 6th meeting. The Mather Senior Center/BOE Central offices at 35 Leroy Ave. overages, proposed garage renovation appropriation and the updated Peddler's Ordinance will be on the agenda. The Rules Committee is also considering requiring members with less than 50% attendance at RTM and committee meetings to acquire 25 signatures to run for another term. Finally, there was a discussion about the why the street lights for a new agreement with Eversource for LED lighting were purchased from a contingency fund. Mrs. Stevenson stated that the lights were purchased from an Infrastructure Reserve Account and Mr. Zagrodzky noted that the cost of purchasing the lights would be returned to the Town through a rebate and energy cost savings.

First Selectman

Mrs. Stevenson reported that a pilot phase of the new LED street lighting is being planned to allow review of the color spectrum and field measurements of lighting levels. The State is reviewing its easement for the property at 41 Hecker Ave. Once the State and the Darien Land Trust have their easement agreements the purchase will move forward.

The gas expansion project has begun with the installation of gas lines to the new building at Leroy Ave. and West Ave. The details of the service agreement are being finalized. The Darien and Norwalk Health Departments are working together to implement bike routes to Norwalk Community College. Lastly, Mrs. Stevenson has asked WestCOG members to review the Route 1 corridor study and consider protected crosswalks on Post Road in advance of the Corbin Road redevelopment.

Mrs. Stevenson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2016 meeting. Sarah Seelye moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Michael Harman. The minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0. Susan Cameron abstained. Sarah Seelye moved to adjourn, seconded by Michael Harman and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary
Recording Secretary